THE SELF-REFERENTIAL REPRODUCTION OF ÉLITESIN TRANSFORMATIONAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Abstract— The ruling elite is one of the main actors of the political process. The leading position of the political elite in societies in transformation allows this actor to determine the amount of possible changes in the system. Analysis of the characteristics of the reproduction of the ruling elite in transforming conditions allows to diagnose the amount and direction of change in the social system. The study analyzes the specific features of reproduction of the political elite as a self-referential system.

Keywords— Autopoiesis, Politicalélite,Self-Reference System,Systems Analysis, Transformational Political System

I. INTRODUCTION

The power élite is one of the most important factor in the political process. Changing of the élite structure, its role and significance in the public system requires applying new methods of analysis, since the former approaches were not always functional for solving newly emerging problems.

Application of the systems analysis to studying the political élite enabled us to analyze the structure and functions of the élite, create a model of élitogenesis.

Studying the political élite as a system but not merely a social group allowed to substantially broaden the scope for analyzing it. The systems approach enabled us to work out a more flexible and effective theoretical basis for studying political élites.

Analyzing the élites from the viewpoint of the systems theory made it possible to consider the object under study as a complex system existing in the conditions of transformation thereby determining the conceptual framework of the study.

II. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

In our research, we have applied a systems approach to the analysis of Russia's regional power élite (1991 – 2010) [2]. As the sources we used: normative legal acts of the Russian Federation, expert opinions, biographies of members of the political elite, and a memoir. The systems approach specifies the following conceptual framework of the study.

2.1. The Structure of Political Elite System

Political elite is thea self-reference system.[1] Self-reference assumes a principle that is designated as the principle of a compound constitution which declines the former idea that the system as a whole the system of political élite in particular consist only of elements and connections between them. No element can be determined irrespective of the system [1; 63-70]. So, the system of political élite considers its elements as such and it qualifies them in connection with this. As a result, the system of political élite can be constituted and changed only by means of the relations of its elements, but not by means of disintegration and reorganization. The system as a unity that cannot be decomposed any further is each time the element [1; 72].

The realization of intra-élite connections in consequence of the integrity calls for selection but not mere inclusion of new elements in the system structure. The fact that rather unlike élite systems are formed out of the initial stratum of fairly similar unities may be accounted for by the necessity of selection and by the fact of conditioning by the selection acts. It should be noted that the self-reference, at the level of elements, reproduction of the élite is to secure elements of those kinds that are stipulated by the existing system of relations, thereby ensuring reproduction, which results in setting the boundaries of variations of transformation of the élite structure.

The process of reproduction of the system of political élite can be applied only internally. In other words, the élite structures, unless they are willing to relinquish the foundation of their existence, have to secure the capacity for attaching reproduction, which limits the range of feasible changes within the framework of the system.

The system of political élite that has at its disposal its own structures and processes is capable of subordinating to these forms of strengthening of selectivity all the elements that are produced and reproduced by it. As a result it will be able to regulate its own autopoiesis [1; 60, 73]. However, in the conditions of the surrounding world this consideration of the whole aggregate of possible elements by means of the forms of strengthening

[1]The system is characterized as a self-reference one if the elements of which the given system is comprised are organized by the system itself as functional unities, and in all the relations between these elements the system provides reference to such self-constitution, thereby continuously reproducing it.

selectivity cannot still have any exclusive applicability. This works merely as the procedure of differentiation, consequently, in analyzing the élite structures one should take into account the events of deviation, while in respect of intra-élite processes account should be taken of possible and unrealizable ones.

Political élite structures leave open a limited set of choice possibilities. By means of this selection the structures can direct further acts of selection, each time reducing the possibilities to visible situations. The processes are realized due to the fact that particular acts of choice are arranged in time relative to each other, are joined together with each other, and, consequently, the previous selection acts, and respectively, its expected acts, are built in a separate selection act as its prerequisites [1; 79-80].

It is noteworthy that in the framework of new conceptions of the theory of systems, the structure does not act as such, but is part of the experience of differences [1; 33, 49]. Thus, the élite system creates its own past as its own causal foundation that allows it to distance from the causal pressure of the surrounding world. As a result the modus operandi of self-reference élite systems passes on to such forms of causality which to a large degree take the system away from the safe external control.

Élite systems that create their own causality, in that case are no longer subject to "causal explanation" (unless in the procedure of the observer's reduction); and the reason lies not only in the lack of transparency of their integrity, but due to logical foundations. They assume themselves as the produce of self-reproduction [1; 63-70]. The system of political élite may perceive any external influence or external stimulus first and foremost as information, i.e. an experience of difference; and in that form fixes it in itself.

The integrity of political élite is reproduced as an inevitable trait at each of the higher levels of formation of the given system. An integrated system of political élite must adapt not only to its surrounding world, but also to its own integrated nature. The system should be able to cope with its internal crises and "challenges", evolve mechanisms, say, that could reduce any deviated behavior, which becomes possible only due to the fact that there exist dominant basic structures [1; 62]. Consequently, élite, as a self-reference system has to be self-adaptable, namely, to be able to adapt to its own integrity. This fact explains why élite systems cannot continuously follow changes in its surrounding world even in the conditions of transformation of the regime.

It should be pointed out that the degree of integration of political élite may be different. In the systems theory, systems of higher (emergent) order may possess lower integrity than systems of lower order, since they themselves determine the integrity and the number of elements of which they consist; i.e., in the integrity they are independent of their real foundation [1; 49-50]. It also means that the necessary and, respectively, sufficient integrity of the political élite system is not determined by the "material" used by the system, but can be determined anew for each system formation level either in conformity with the relevant surrounding world, or with respective political regime.

2.2. System Boundaries

The most important requirement for isolation of the systems, along with the constitution of their own elements is determination of the boundaries. The boundaries may be considered determined enough, if they allow to process problems of behavior of the borderline, that remained open, or attribute the events either inside or outside, by the system's own means [1; 58-61].

In a general sense the boundaries of political elite possess a dual function of separation and joining the system and the surrounding world. If the boundaries are determined accurately, the elements may be attached either to the system, or to its surrounding world. On the contrary, relations may exist both between the system and the surrounding world. The boundary separates the elements, but not necessarily the relations; it separates the events, but allows causal actions to be realized [1;58]. This feature distinguishes the notion of system from the notion of structure.

This, in itself old and indisputable notion of the boundary is a prerequisite for the latest development of the theory of systems, in which the distinction between open and confidential systems is already perceived not as antipodes of the types, but as a manifestation of strengthening [1; 58-59]. With the help of the boundaries, the systems may at the same time close and open, thereby separating the internal interdependences from interdependences system/surrounding world, and connect them with each other. In this respect, the boundaries are predominantly an acquisition of evolution. Any higher development of the system, first and foremost, its development of the systems of internally- closed self-reference assumes the presence of boundaries [1; 59, 267].

In the perspective of the dynamics of development, the boundaries act as a factor of amplification. In the System theory this aspect is designated as the derivative of systems differentiation. Formation of the boundaries interrupts the discontinuity of processes connecting the system with the surrounding world [1; 42, 61]. The discontinuities produced in the process may be fairly regular, allowing the system an opportunity to estimate its contacts with the surrounding world.

The boundaries of the system always cut off the surrounding world; yet, the requirements presented here are changed if the system in its own surrounding world has to discern other systems (and their

surrounding worlds) and determine its boundaries in accordance with that distinction. The relation in which the boundaries are determined under pressure of the necessity of their input, consequently, the relationship that requires a more accurate determination of their boundaries and their preservation, follows from the above distinction between the aggregate surrounding world and the systems in the surrounding world of the system [1; 43].

The notion of a boundary implies that the processes crossing them (for instance, information exchange), proceed in the transition of the system in different conditions (for example, in the conditions of fragmentation or consensus of the ruling élite). One should take into account that the boundaries do not signify any rupture of the connections. In this respect, preserving the boundaries is a condition for retaining the system of ruling élite, since the distinction is a functional prerequisite of self-reference operations.

2.3. Interaction between the political elite and the surrounding world

In this connection we would like to dwell in greater detail on the difference between the system of political élite and the surrounding world which has deep consequences for understanding the causality within the framework of the system of political élite. The ruling élite as a system is oriented at its own surrounding world not only in an adaptive sort of way, but first and foremost in structure. The political elite systems are constituted and preserved by means of creating and preserving the difference with the surrounding world.

For their part, the systems in the surrounding world of some system are oriented at their surrounding worlds. However, no system can totally control someone else's relations system/surrounding world, if only by way of destruction. Therefore, every system has its surrounding world in the form of an involved complex structure of mutual relations of the system and the surrounding world, and at the same time as a unity constituted by the system itself that requires only selective watching[1; 44].

The fact that it is important to differentiate the surrounding world of the system and the system in the surrounding world of the given system is one of the most important consequences of the paradigm system/surrounding world [1; 43]. So, first and foremost one should draw a hard and fast line between the relations of dependence between the surrounding world and the system from the relations of dependence between the systems. This distinction undermines the former themes of domination/subordination. Whether the relations in which one system dominates over the other can and how far they can develop not in the last place depend on the situation of dependence of both systems and the system of their relations on the respective surrounding world [1; 44-46].

The line of separation between the system and the surrounding world should not be perceived as isolation and integration of the most important causes in the system; for it, to a much greater degree, slits the causal relationships. Hence, as a result of evolution, a complex of "productive reasons" can be formed, and being once formed, supplement appropriate reasons from the surrounding world [1; 47].

So, in the framework of systems approach "the political élite" concept has been determined, and some functional set of instruments for the solution of scientific problems in terms of élitology has been created.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of our studies of political elites in the transformation of post-Soviet space, it was revealed that the actor operates as a self-referential system. The reproduction of the political elite as a self-referential system has the following characteristics.

3.1. The Elements of Certain Type and Homogeneity of System Operations

The elements get quality merely because they are considered in the relations of the system, i.e., these elements are elements only for the system. In this connection the unity of the element is constituted as such only due to the system that uses the element as such in order to establish relations, and is not set ontologically. So, the system of political élite considers its elements as such and it qualifies them in connection with this.

The actions owe their unity to the conctruction of their relations in the framework of the system of élite, within which they are constituted as actions. Thus, the entity that acts for the system as a unity that cannot be decomposed any further is each time the element. As a result, the system of political élite can be constituted and changed only by means of the relations of its elements, but not by means of disintegration and reorganization.

3.2. Confidentiality of the Self-Reference Method of Operation of the System of Political Élite

The process of reproduction of the system of political élite can be applied only internally. One cannot use it to connect the system with the surrounding world in a broad sense of the word [2]. It should be noted that the present concept of self-reference and confidential system does not contradict the openness of the system of political élite to surrounding world. In this case a new combination of the confidentiality of the structure of the system and its openness to the surrounding world takes place; in other words, in the combination of a distinction "system/surrounding world" and self-reference system structure. Confidentiality of the self-reference method of operation of the system of political élite is rather a

form of broadening feasible contacts with the surrounding world.

Constituting the elements that are more fitted for determining, the given system reinforces the integrated approach to the surrounding world feasible for the system. In order to do this it is necessary to isolate the self-reference-closed reproductive connection; and only in the relation of the system created by that action it will be possible to formulate problems of formation and changing the structures of political élite. In other words, the élite structures, unless they are willing to relinquish the foundation of their existence, have to secure the capacity for attaching autopoietic reproduction, which limits the range of feasible changes within the framework of the system [1;70].

3.3. The Integration

If a system of political élite is analyzed proceeding from the fundamental conceptual difference between the element and relation, it becomes clear that increasing the number of elements that have to keep together in the system or for the system in the function of the surrounding world, the system faces a limitation that hampers establishing connections of each element with every other element. Let us turn to the definition of the notion of integrated approach in the theory of systems: "integrated is such a mutually connected set of elements, in which, due to immanent limitations of their capability for joining it becomes impossible for any element to be at any time connected with any other element"[1; 52-53]. The notion of immanent limitation is indicative of an internal integration of elements, independent of the system, which at the same time ensures their "capacity to comprise a unity"[1; 53]. In this respect, integrity is an object-substance that conditions itself – on the grounds that the elements themselves have to be constituted in complex; because to be able to enter the unity at higher levels of system formation, their capacity for joining must be limited. Therefore, the integrity of political élite is reproduced as an inevitable trait at each of the higher levels of formation of the given system. The fact that rather unlike élite systems, political regimes, social systems are formed out of the initial stratum of fairly similar unities may be accounted for by the necessity of selection and by the fact of conditioning by the selection acts.

It should be pointed out that the degree of integration of political élite may be different. In the systems theory, systems of higher (emergent) order may possess lower integrity than systems of lower order, since they themselves determine the integrity and the number of elements of which they consist; i.e., in the integrity they are independent of their real foundation. It also means that the necessary and, respectively, sufficient integrity of the political élite system is not determined by the "material" used by the system, but can be determined anew for each system formation level either in conformity with the relevant surrounding world, or with respective political regime. In accordance, emergence is not merely an accumulation of integrity, but represents interruption and a new onset of the construction of integrity by means of social processes of attaching.

The peculiarity of the relationship consists in declining any possibilities of unilateral control. So, in the environment of political élite, some differences in influence, hierarchy, asymmetry may take place, but no part of the given system can control another part without falling under control itself; in these conditions it is possible, taking into account the peculiarities of political regime, that any control is effected in the anticipation of counter control, therefore, the preservation, in spite of anything, of asymmetrical structure inside the political élite always requires some extra special measures of precaution.

3.4. The System of Selection

The realization of intra-élite connections in consequence of the integrity calls for selection but not mere inclusion of new elements in the system structure. Selection qualifies the élite elements and recruits them, although other relations may be possible for them. The establishment of a connection serves to qualify the elements from the point of selecting their capabilities. In other words, in the capacity of integrity any élite system possesses a redundancy of possibilities, which it reduces on its own choice. As a rule, such a reduction is effected in communicative processes, and in order to achieve this, the élite system wants to subordinate its elements to the complexes capable of communication. The quality of political élite becomes possible only due to selection, while selection is necessary for the sake of integrity.

In complex systems the notion of selection is changed. Any selection assumes restrictions and is an objectless process, an operation triggered by some differences cropping up. In N. Luman's concept, the notion of selection is the main notion in the theory of order; and the reason that accounts for the emergence of order is a difference but not the best regulating property of the system: "the difference determines not what ought to be selected, but rather the fact that the choice should be made. It seems that to this end it is primarily required to differentiate between the system/surrounding world, which demands of the system to make a selection by means of its own integrity"[1; 59].

By means of this selection the structures can direct further acts of selection, each time reducing the possibilities to visible situations. The processes are realized due to the fact that particular acts of choice are arranged in time relative to each other, are joined together with each other, and, consequently, the previous selection acts, and respectively, its expected

acts, are built in a separate selection act as its prerequisites.

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The political elite operates as a complex self-referential system. Self-referential, item-level "autopoietic", reproduction of elites provides elements of the types that are defined by the existing system of relations, thereby ensuring the reproduction; as a result boundaries are set variations of transformational processes.

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